

## **Overview of R10 Tribes, R10 Tribal Program, and Priority Tribal Issues**

### **R10 Tribes**

Of the nation's 564 federally-recognized tribes, nearly half (48%) are located in Region 10, with 229 (40%) in Alaska. Diversity amongst the 271 tribes and their environments is great. Many reservation-based tribes in the lower 3 states (Washington, Oregon, and Idaho) have thousands of acres to manage and thousands of members. While most Alaskan tribes and villages are small and geographically isolated, Regional Tribal Corporations (created by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act) control more than 44 million acres. There are more cultural differences among tribes than there are similarities, but all are intricately linked to the environment and subsistence resources. Tribes face a vast array of environmental issues with very little funding, at a variety of different levels of environmental program management capacity. Most tribes in Region 10 receive Indian Environmental General Assistance Program (GAP) grants for building and establishing environmental programs. Many tribes in the lower 3 states receive some additional EPA funds through media-specific competitive grant programs. Alaska tribes, and some lower 3 tribes without reservations, are ineligible for most media program funding based on statutory or program requirements to demonstrate jurisdiction.

### **R10's Tribal Program**

Region 10's Tribal Program is led by the Tribal Trust and Assistance Unit (TTAU) in R10's Office of Ecosystems, Tribal, and Public Affairs (ETPA). Guided by R10's Tribal Strategy and R10's Strategic Endeavor to Enhance Tribal Environments, R10's Tribal Program facilitates implementation of EPA's Indian Policy, Administrator Jackson's Priority to Build State and Tribal Partnerships, EPA's Strategic Objective 5.3 to Build Tribal Capacity, and supports all five of EPA's Strategic Goals. TTAU consists of a Manager and 15 Tribal Coordinators who serve as liaisons to 271 tribal governments and as Project Officers for more than 240 tribal GAP and Performance Partnership grants (PPGs). Staff efforts and activities toward fulfilling liaison and advocacy roles, programmatic and technical capacity building, and education and outreach are significant, but limited by the disparity between the numbers of tribes and FTE. R10's Tribal Program also includes an Executive-level Senior Tribal Policy Advisor, a R10 Tribal Consultation Specialist, an Alaska Tribal Resource Extraction Policy Advisor, part-time Tribal Specialists in each program office, and a Regional Tribal Operations Committee (RTOC) composed of EPA executives and elected tribal representatives. R10 is currently updating its Tribal Consultation Procedures, and will serve as lead region for EPA's National Tribal Program in 2011.

### **Priority Issue for R10 Tribal Program**

- addressing federally-recognized Alaska tribes equitably in Agency policies and programs

### **Priority Issues Identified by R10 Tribes**

- upholding trust responsibility to protect subsistence and treaty reserved resources
- removing statutory, regulatory, and procedural barriers to tribal environmental protection
- jurisdictional issues preventing eligibility for funds and implementation of programs
- increasing funding for tribal environmental programs
- improving tribal consultation and treatment as state processes
- safe drinking water and basic sanitation systems
- tribal fish consumption rates and water quality standards
- air quality and impacts of climate change
- closing landfills and open dumps
- impacts of various resource extraction activities
- application of traditional ecological knowledge and more holistic approaches to environmental protection

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